



Food drive helps those in need

April 11, 2019

In a Los Alamos warehouse, Selena Valencia looks out across a row of large bins containing canned tuna, peanut butter, rice, cereal and other food.

"This is going to make a real difference for a lot of people," she says.

Valencia coordinated the 2019 Laboratory food drive, which took place during March and saw Lab employees donate over 4,000 pounds of food for people in need across Northern New Mexico. Collection boxes were set up across the Laboratory, and employees also donated over \$2600, which was used to purchase additional food items.

Together, the food and monetary contributions equate to nearly 14,000 meals.

"In the past we have run food drives around the holiday season, and we continue to do a 'bring your turkey to work' day before Thanksgiving," says Valencia. "But in conversation with the agencies we work with, it became clear that a drive around this time of year can be more useful in helping families in Northern New Mexico fight hunger."

Research from the Santa Fe-based Food Depot suggests that hunger affects one of every six people and one of every four children in New Mexico.

Valencia (front) loading the donated food onto the Food Depot truck with Food Depot employees Sam Madrid (on the truck) and Fred Santistevan.

The Food Depot collected the food donated by Laboratory employees before distributing it to fourteen partner agencies who made it available to people facing food insecurity in their communities. The partners are:

- San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen and Knights of Columbus (Española)
- Wings for Hope and St. Elizabeth's Shelter (Santa Fe)
- St Vincent de Paul (Abiquiu, Chimayo, Coyote, Española, Ohkay Owingeh and Pojoaque), LA Cares (Los Alamos)
- North Central Food Pantry (Questa)
- Taos Feeds Taos
- Samaritan House (Las Vegas)

"The Food Depot is grateful for the long standing commitment LANL has demonstrated to ending hunger," says Jill Dixon, director of development at The Food Depot. "In every community, there are children, seniors, and families that are struggling to make ends meet. LANL's annual drive, now held in the spring, illustrates the power of community to affect change."

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